

**TESTIMONY OF KELLEY MOORE, RUSHFORD CENTER FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON CHILDREN  
February 28, 2012**

**Supporting  
S.B. 157 AN ACT REVISING THE DEFINITION OF A CHILD CARE FACILITY TO  
CONFORM WITH THE DEFINITION OF A CHILD.**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Urban and Members of the Select Committee on Children, my name is Kelley Moore and I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 157- An Act Revising the Definition of a Child Care Facility to Conform with the Definition of a Child.

Currently, I am employed as a Referral Coordinator at the Rushford Center where I work to connect families to treatment. Rushford is a non-profit behavioral health prevention and treatment provider headquartered in Meriden, with facilities also in Middletown, Glastonbury, Portland and Durham.

Rushford strongly supports Senate Bill 157 which would revise the definition of "child care facility" under §17a-93 and allow for people who have turned eighteen but are still in school to be placed in the appropriate treatment setting. Under the current definition some full time high school students under the age of twenty-one and in need of mental health or substance abuse treatment are placed in adult programs that are not adequate or appropriate for their needs.

For instance, last year an eighteen year old high school senior could not be admitted at one of Rushford's residential facilities due to this restriction. Despite these students falling under the statutory definition of "child" they are prohibited from being placed into a congregate residential setting with their peers because of the definition of "child care facility." As it currently stands, people must be "placed in a congregate residential setting prior to such person's eighteenth birthday" even if they are still a student.

Striking that portion of the definition and passing this legislation is critical to the treatment of these adolescents who are still developing at that age. This is especially true of the population we serve who struggle with substance abuse and mental health issues.

A conversation with a RN, reported that an eighteen-year old that enters into adult treatment today, as she describes it, "is a little sheep in a lions den." The eighteen-year old is more apt to find difficulty handling the emotional portion of treatment, a necessary part of group therapy that allows a participant to develop new ways of relating to people. The difficulties that bring an adult to treatment, such as job loss or family abandonment, are vastly different than that of an adolescent who might never have left home.

I urge you to pass Senate Bill 157, which would allow children to be placed in the appropriate treatment facility. Thank you for your time and attention.